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not infrequently that a woman has only an open kitchen and uses her sleeping-room for wet-season cooking and for storage purposes. 343

A woman owns all her cooking utensils, and it is usually her mother who equips her with these as soon as her husband has built her a kitchen. Before that she uses the pots of the woman whose kitchen she shares. The fittings of a Tale kitchen are not elaborate: a fireplace consisting of two stones placed side by side against the wall; a flat stone or low stool facing it on which the woman sits while cooking; the stirring-stick leaning against the wall to the right of the fireplace, and one or two old and partly broken calabashes to the left of it; this is the complete picture. 415 422 343 354

The most exacting task in a woman's routine is the provision of firewood and water. She collects her firewood on her husband's bush farm or on unowned bush land, which may be as much as 4 or 5 miles from her home. It takes her the best part of a day to collect enough for three days. The strain of coping with her firewood requirements becomes acute when a woman has a new-born infant to care for and cannot absent herself for many hours at a time. She may therefore invite a young sister or cousin to come and stay with her and assist her; and such a young girl is often eventually taken in marriage by her husband. Co-wives never lend or give each other firewood; but when a woman has recently been confined, her mother and sisters bring her gifts of firewood when they come to congratulate her, and her husband looks about for heavy logs to bring home to her. He may assist her to carry water, too, for a few days. This is the only time when a man performs these domestic duties. At the end of the harvesting season each woman carefully collects guinea-corn stalks from the fields and stores them on the flat roof of the sleeping-room or inside the kitchen for firewood. 462 313 312

Water is kept in large earthenware pots (*kwoor*) in the kitchen. There is no scarcity of water during the rainy season, as every ditch and furrow becomes a stream, but in the dry season it is a problem. The women and young girls spend many patient hours at the water-holes collecting the water, drop by drop, in their calabashes, as it seeps through the moist sand. This water is kept for cooking and drinking purposes only. A few water-holes do not dry away completely, but become foul with rotting vegetation and stagnancy. The 312

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1. Bringing home firewood: Mother and daughter

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2. A woman in her kitchen (posed)

[facing p. 264]